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Ari BLM Program Summary



Under the Department of the Interior, the federal Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing the nation's public lands and resources in a combination of ways that best serves the needs of the American people.

Management is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. BLM balances recreational, commercial, scientific and cultural interests as it strives for long-term protection of renewable and nonrenewable resources, including range, timber, minerals, recreation, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness, and natural, scenic, scientific and cultural values.

In 1812, Congress established the General Land Office to administer the public domain. The passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934 established the U.S. Grazing Service to provide active range management on public domain lands. In 1946, the Presidential Reorganization Plan No. 2 merged the Grazing Service with the General Land Office to create the Bureau of Land Management within the Department of the Interior.

Arizona BLM administers 14.2 million acres of public land located in four districts - Phoenix, Safford, Yuma and the Arizona Strip. Management, coordination and direction for BLM's four Arizona districts comes from the Arizona State Office, guided by State Director Lester K. Rosenkrance. Following are some resource program highlights.

Recreation

BLM manages a full range of recreation activities, including hiking, mountain biking, rock hounding, hunting, nature study, camping, off-highway vehicle exploration and boating. The largest concession management program in the Bureau is managed by Arizona BLM. Sixteen concessions in the Yuma District complement the less developed recreation areas by providing full-service-campgrounds, trailer and recreational vehicle parks, etc.

BLM boasts nine million visitor use days on Arizona public lands, with seven million in the Yuma District's Colorado River area alone. Thousands of areas are open to a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. There are 32 resource management areas and points of interest throughout Arizona including campgrounds, rock hound areas, off-highway vehicle areas and trails.

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BLM also manages camping in the unique Long-Term Visitor Area program in the Yuma District. Each year thousands of winter visitors stay in designated LTVA's from September 15 to April 15. Winter visitors pay a \$50 fee for the LTVA season. More than 100 volunteers contribute their time and energy to make the LTVA program a success.

Recent land acquisitions, such as the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area near Sierra Vista, the Empire-Cienega Resource Conservation Area near Sonoita, and the Gubler-Frei Ranch in the Arizona Strip, have provided additional recreation opportunities that previously were closed or restricted from public use.

Forestry

BLM administers over 1 million acres of woodlands, comprised mostly of pinyon-juniper and chaparral, and 2 million acres of southwestern desert vegetation including mesquite and ironwood. Some desert areas contain salvage restricted species such as barrel cactus, Joshua trees and saguaro. These cannot be taken off public land without a permit.

Arizona BLM manages 41,000 acres of riparian vegetation such as mesquite, sycamore, walnut, ash, cottonwood, willows and tamarisk.

Wilderness

Forty-seven wilderness areas, encompassing 1.4 million acres of prime wilderness are administered throughout the state. These lands were acquired with the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1984 and the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990. Some of the wilderness areas include Paiute, Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs and Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness in the Arizona Strip District, Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness in the Safford District, Arastra Mountain and Harquahala Wilderness in the Phoenix District, and Eagletail Mountain, Muggins Mountains and Trigo Mountains Wilderness in the Yuma District.

Range

Livestock grazing is permitted on about 12 million acres of Arizona public lands. In fiscal year 1992, 821 livestock operators grazed more than 56,000 cattle and 2,000 sheep and goats on 837 grazing allotments. Approximately \$946,660 in grazing fees were collected in fiscal year 1992.

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Cultural Resources

Arizona BLM manages some of Arizona's best preserved prehistoric and historic artifacts spanning human occupation in North America, including two mammoth kill sites, remnants of a Spanish military fort and Indian dwellings over 1,000 years old. BLM evaluates and protects a varied body of cultural resources for scientific, cultural and educational uses. More than 432,000 acres of Arizona public land have been inventoried with 7,231 properties recorded.

Wildlife

Arizona public lands contain permanent or seasonal habitats for over 800 vertebrate species. Priority treatment is given to the 26 federally listed threatened or endangered plant and animal species. BLM manages and protects 41,485 acres of key riparian areas along 1,400 miles of streams.

Wild Horses and Burros

Arizona BLM manages two small wild horse herds of 100 animals each in the Cerbat Mountains northwest of Kingman, nestled between the Cibola Wildlife Refuge and the Army's Yuma Proving Ground. In addition, BLM manages 3,100 wild burros roaming public lands in western Arizona.

Land

Leases, rights-of-way and use permits are issued by the BLM for a wide variety of uses including parks, power transmission and recreational events. In addition, BLM Arizona manages a successful Land Exchange program in which the Bureau acquires state and private land having high public value—wildlife, riparian, cultural and other resource values. The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and the Empire-Cienega Resource Conservation Area were acquired through exchange. In return, BLM releases land with minimal resource value.

Minerals

BLM administers 14.2 million surface acres and approximately 17.5 million subsurface acres. BLM supervises about 72,853 acres of Indian mineral leases and administers mining claim records and mineral leases on lands managed by other federal agencies.

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Minerals cont.

BLM's Minerals program can be broken into three major mineral resources - locatable, leasable and salable minerals. In locatable minerals, there are 30,000 active mining claims recorded on Arizona public lands. Mining claim activity includes exploration and development of gold, silver, copper and other "hardrock" minerals.

Arizona public lands provide a good source for "salable minerals" such as sand/gravel, stone and clay. These minerals are sold to applicants at fair market value. BLM also provides salable minerals free to state, county and municipal highway departments for road construction.

Oil and gas leasing falls under the leasable minerals program. Approximately 350,000 acres are under lease in 200 separate oil and gas leases. The only oil and gas production in Arizona comes from leases on the Navajo Indian Reservation. There are approximately 42,550 acres under lease in 11 leases containing 49 producing wells. These producing leases are managed by the Farmington Resource Area of BLM New Mexico.

BLM also manages the Indian Mineral Leasing program. Coal, copper and sand/gravel are the three major minerals leased on Indian land in Arizona. Currently, there are 15 Indian leases under BLM's supervision. Peabody Coal Company leases the Black Mesa and Kayenta Coal Mines from the Navajo and Hopi Indians.

Support Services Programs

Law Enforcement

BLM is charged by law to manage and protect its lands and the vast resources associated with them. This protection can take many forms such as alerting visitors that certain activities are allowed while others are not. BLM has highly trained special agents and uniformed rangers to enforce applicable federal laws and provide visitor assistance on the public lands.

Special agents are responsible for enforcing federal laws and regulations relating to the public lands and resources. This includes criminal investigations and the arrest of violators.

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Rangers are the uniformed part of BLM law enforcement. The high visibility of the uniformed rangers driving clearly marked patrol vehicles produces a deterrent effect on wrongdoers. They also provide visitors with a source to seek information and assistance.

Land Information Systems

BLM operates Land Information Systems to manage data and information about public lands including survey records, ownership status and resources for both BLM and other users.

Hazardous Materials

This program focuses on identifying, managing and controlling all imminent hazards to human health and/or the environment. Past and current land uses, both authorized and illegal, have created a variety of threats to public land users and natural systems. Illegal dumping and unlawful operations are the main current use problems.

BLM arranges for emergency removal and cleanup of hazardous material sites on public land. Sites are usually identified by an inventory that ranks their potential for human health risks. Future risks and liabilities are reduced by aggressively identifying, stabilizing and cleaning up contaminated sites. People making unlawful disposals or using illegal processes involving hazardous materials on public land are prosecuted. Hazardous materials specialists minimize current risks by assuring compliance with applicable state and federal laws, and working closely with other BLM programs that involve hazardous materials.

Fire Management

BLM Arizona averages 170 wildfires on 20,000 acres each year. The Fire Management program also responds to an average of 36 false alarms and 80 assists to other agencies each year. Arizona BLM prescribe burns an average of 2,000 acres annually in support of resource management. BLM Arizona's fire program maintains 13 engines, three contract helicopters, one lead plane, one boat, 50 seasonal fire fighters and 30 permanent fire staff.

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The Fire Management program is very much interdistrict and interagency in nature. Districts participate in interagency fire management zones to assist in fire suppression on all lands within the state, and coordination of dispatching, resource ordering, training, prevention and smoke management. The State Office participates in the operations and management of the Southwest Area Coordination Center and Southwest Fire Management Board.

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